

Murphy (C. W.)

The coal tar derivatives;

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## Society Reports.

### MITCHELL DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY.

*Twenty-second Annual Meeting held at West Baden, Indiana, July 7th and 8th, 1892.*

#### FIRST DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Society convened in the hall of the West Baden Hotel, and was called to order at 2 P. M., by the President, Dr. E. S. Elder, of Indianapolis.

After the transaction of some miscellaneous business, the reading of papers was proceeded with. The first paper read was by Dr. C. W. Murphy, of Salem, Indiana, entitled

#### THE COAL TAR DERIVATIVES; THEIR USE AND ABUSE.

Antipyrin, antikamnia, acetanilid and phenacetine being the most frequently used and important of the newly discovered chemical agents, the speaker's remarks were confined principally to their consideration. Antifebrin and acetanilid are the same articles under different names. When the physician prescribes acetanilid he gives its pharmaceutical name; when he prescribes antifebrin he gives its proprietary name; the former is very cheap, the latter more expensive. As there are no restrictions on the manufacture of acetanilid it is easy to understand how, as in the manufacture of other drugs, an impure article is sometimes placed upon the market.

All of these agents come under the head of anodynes or analgesics, possessing the property of lessening the sensibility of the nerve centers or their peripheral extremities, but in varying degrees. They are also antipyretic in action, and it should never be overlooked that their effect on the system when fever is present is much more powerful than when it is absent. While opium will always stand at the head of anodynes,

its objectionable features of generally inducing constipation, cephalgia, nausea and deranged digestion cause us to make use of the less harmful remedies for the relief of pain in a large class of ailments. The dose of antipyrin should be ten or fifteen grains, and if the pain is not relieved in one or two hours, repeat the dose. Antikamnia, acetanilid and phenacetine are also useful in hemicrania; and all four can be depended upon for the certain relief of hyperæmic headaches. The speaker has many patients who prevent paroxysms of sick headache by one or two doses of antifebrin of six to eight grains each. Some get relief from antipyrin when antifebrin fails. He had used phenacetine in a number of cases of pertussis, and believes it serves a useful purpose in diminishing the severity and frequency of the paroxysms of coughing. For the relief of enteralgia, gastralgia and other nervous affections of the bowels, dependence cannot be placed upon any of these; but antikamnia has given relief in a number of cases of these affections. All of the series have a wide range of usefulness in the treatment of *la grippe*, in relieving the severe muscular and neuralgic pains and in reducing the fever.

The use of all antipyretic remedies must be persisted in until the desired end—the reduction of temperature—is secured; but the peculiarities of each patient must be studied, and these agents must be administered in a way to suit each individual case. A dose that would give the desired result at one period of a disease might prove insufficient or excessive at another period; and a dose that would lower a temperature to the required degree in one individual might require double that amount to get the same result in another. Many authorities recommend giving five to ten grains regularly every three or four hours. In this the writer does not agree, for it is well known that in nearly all fevers there



is an evening exacerbation ; usually the fever rapidly declines after midnight, and does not rise again until 10 or 11 a. m., and sometimes not until 2 or 3 in the afternoon. A powder of seven or ten grains antikamnia in the morning, when the temperature has risen to 103°, will generally keep it down below the point until 7 or 8 p. m., and occasionally it is sufficient for the twenty-four hours ; but if it comes up again any time in the afternoon or evening another dose is given. Should one dose fail to make an impression on the fever, which but seldom occurs, the author gives another dose at the expiration of two hours. In this manner, with from one to three doses, the temperature in almost all fevers is easily maintained below 103°; and, as already stated, it prevents undue tissue waste, lessens nervous irritability, promotes sleep, prevents delirium and complications, and therefore lessens the mortality.

DR. J. M. MATHEWS, of Louisville, said he had been a sufferer from periodical headaches all his lifetime ; he had tried the coal tar derivatives, some of them acting fairly well, others doing him injury, but antikamnia, in his own case, had given entire satisfaction ; so much so, that when he has an attack he can stop it almost instantly with antikamnia in 15 or 20 grain doses.

DR. DUDLEY S. REYNOLDS, of Louisville, said the paper awakened in his mind a consideration of the whole subject of the treatment of the inflammatory, zymotic fevers, antipyresis, etc. In 1882 a discussion of Brand's method of treating typhoid fever was extensively indulged in by the French Society for the Advancement of Science. An eminent Frenchman had been making experiments with salicin, quinine and some of the other alkaloids of the cinchona bark. All the great clinicians of France took part in the discussions. The impression was that high temperature means disintegration of tissue ; it means the active processes of fermentation ; carefully studied, most all the remedial agents employed against these processes will convince one that they are in the nature of anti-ferments. In the chronic inflammations of the so-called rheumatic people, especially the chronic inflammations of the ciliary bodies of the iris, all the different kinds of medicine used in the treatment of high

temperature had been tried—all the eliminating agents, all the depleting agents and mercurial drugs, which had so long been in high esteem by the profession, had almost entirely passed out of use. We now find salol, salicylate of sodium, and more rarely pilocarpine bring about not only reduction of pains, discomfort and of the general bodily temperature, which is always elevated in inflammations of the ciliary body, but actually dissipate the inflammatory process by opening up the lymph channels and tubes by destroying the ferment that occludes them, whether by dissolving some morbid effusion or by general diffusion it is difficult to say, yet the conviction in the minds of Frenchmen was that antipyretics are after all anti-zymotics, those agents which arrest fermentation.

DR. E. S. ELDER, of Indianapolis expressed his appreciation of the paper, and was glad that the author had taken such a bold stand in favor of antipyretic medication, as he believed that an unfounded prejudice had been created against their use by certain members of the profession, who claim that antipyretics assist in producing heart failure. He believed that the injury charged to antipyretic medication resulted from continued high temperature, which meant increased metabolism, or a burning up of the tissues, which of itself was disintegrating and weakening. He considers it good practice in the use of antipyretic remedies to combine with them some heart tonic, such as strychnia or digitalis.

DR. C. W. MURPHY, of Salem, said if there was depression of the heart he used a cardiac tonic, otherwise not. He sometimes uses digitalis and nux vomica in combination. The principal reason for the condemnation of antipyretic medication by certain members of the profession he thought was due to an improper administration of the remedies themselves.

DR. S. H. CHARLTON, of Seymour, Indiana, asked Dr. Murphy in what doses would he consider it safe to use these remedies, and how often. His experience was in favor of giving them in small doses. Five grains were as many as he gives, repeated every three or four hours. He had treated cases in the country by sending these remedies in connection with other medicines, without seeing the cases.



